

## ***Update from the Clerk of Session***

Friends,

This past Sunday, I delivered a Minute for Mission and Ministry. Since this is a time of vacation for many, the text appears below, in the event you were unable to be with us in worship. I also would like to inform the congregation of several motions that Session voted on during our July meeting. These motions have a bearing on the instructions that the Pastor Nominating Committee will be given in our search for a new member of the pastoral staff. The four motions PASSED. They stipulate that:

- We use the job title of Pastor, defined in the Book of Order, for the new position.
- We use “collaborative” as the model for the new Pastor.
- The Staff Committee will write the job description for the new Pastor, to be approved by the Session.
- The Staff Committee will look at the current job descriptions of the Associate Pastors and rewrite them as necessary.

I trust that you will continue to pray for God's guidance on our church and its officers, especially during this time of discernment.

### ***Minute for Mission and Ministry – July 20, 2008***

At the congregation's annual meeting in January, Session presented a 9-step overview of tasks to be completed before the church hires a new pastor, filling the vacancy left when Jeff Aiken officially retired a year ago. We are now at the threshold of the 9<sup>th</sup> of those 9 steps—the election of a Pastor Nominating Committee. A slate of candidates for the committee has been nominated, and the congregational election of the Pastor Nominating Committee will take place next Sunday, July 27, following the service of worship. The PNC will be charged with finding a new pastor to work with our associate pastors.

I'm here this morning to announce the completion of a key step for the interim period and for the coming work of the PNC—the report of the Mission Study Task Force. This dedicated group consisted of 12 congregation members and a staff advisor. They represented a variety of constituencies in the congregation and worked very hard for more than 4 months to produce a report at the start of summer that the PNC could draw upon immediately upon election. During those 4 months, the Mission Study Task Force:

- reviewed results of a formal congregational survey and town hall meetings held in the church in 2007;
- conducted a new survey of their own to ensure more members were heard;
- researched the history and resources of our church;
- investigated trends in the community and denomination;
- and worked to discern the directions this information is pointing our church.

After receiving the report at the end of May, Session on June 25 adopted and endorsed the first 4 pages of the Mission Study Task Force report. This section consists of vision and mission statements, the charge of the Task Force, core values of our congregation, overviews of the congregation's strengths and weaknesses, and a list of functions that the pastoral staff fulfills. Copies of these pages are available in the Narthex and have been posted on the church's Web site, [www.fpcallentown.org](http://www.fpcallentown.org).

The report also includes recommendations for a wide variety of areas of the church, and Session has begun studying those to establish priorities for the next year and beyond.

This is a very exciting time for our church, and many of us feel the Holy Spirit at work. I hope you will join me in thanking the Mission Study Task Force for its dedication, commitment, and vision. The members of the Task Force are (please stand if you are present as I call your name) Janet Ney, Jami Cooper, Larry Deal, Rick Ensley, Jon Lentz, Mike Loomis, Sam Moussa, Laura Riker, Jen Staib, Marijo Taylor, Bill Townsend, Kelsey White, and Kathleen Jamhoury.

In conclusion, I would like to read the vision statement and verse that open the Mission Study Task Force report: **We are people who expect to learn from God's Word, expect to work as God's hands, expect to encounter God in all people, and expect to rejoice in God always.**

From John 17: 18, 20: *"As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me."*

-Linda Kirner, Clerk of Session