



Dear First Presbyterian Friends,

One of the key focus areas of my work as Interim Pastor is assisting the Self Study Committee. This committee is an outstanding group and consists of Pat Tamblyn (Chairperson), Elders Sue Jeffers and Erika Boothman, Elders-Elect Sarah Stitt and Marc Buchanan, Deacons Cindy King and Mark Goodhart, and Virginia Koster. Their creativity, insight and commitment are exceptional, and I count it a privilege to be working with them. The committee's work is centered on helping us as a congregation have a good sense of our history, a clear understanding of our identity, and discerning where God is calling us in ministry in the future. Their report will be crucial to the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee as it develops a Church Information Form that will present the church to possible candidates for your next pastor. The last such report, done way back in 1991, served this purpose well, and I have every confidence this committee's report will as well.

Crucial to the Self Study Committee's work is congregational input. This will be gathered in several ways over the next weeks – congregational gatherings, a survey open to all members, meetings with church committees, input from leaders in the larger Ann Arbor community. I want to encourage as many of you as are able, from high school age on up to our most mature members, to sign up to attend one of three upcoming meetings to share your thoughts, stories, and dreams. The meetings, to be held at church, are scheduled as follows:

Sunday, October 18 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Monday, October 26, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 1, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Sign-up sheets are available in several locations around the church as of this past Sunday. You may also sign up by calling the church at 662-4466.

The meetings will include time to break into small groups which will work with a facilitator to do a SWOT – that's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats - analysis of our congregation. There will also be time for conversation around memories and dreams of our life together here as God's people. I believe everyone attending will find the event both interesting and pleasant.

In the Book of Acts, we are told that when the apostles sought to make a decision, they did "what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." That's what we are seeking to do in these meetings, indeed in all the Self Study Committee's work – to draw together our shared wisdom with the leading of the Holy Spirit that we might discern our future as God's people in this place.

A prayer to share:

O gracious and holy God, give us diligence to seek you, wisdom to perceive you, and patience to wait for you.

Grant us, O God, a mind to meditate on you, eyes to behold you, ears to listen to your word; a heart to love you, and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen +

See you in church.

Grace and peace,

Jany Farris