



*Dear First Presbyterian Friends,*

As of September 1, it is my joy and privilege to join with you in ministry as your Interim Pastor. I am grateful to the Session for their invitation to serve in this capacity, and I will seek to engage this work with energy, intelligence, imagination, love and good humor. The rich and expansive life and ministries of the church ensure that I will be on the steep side of the learning curve for some time, but that's part of what makes an interim position fascinating. In addition to me, three new Lilly residents are beginning their work with the congregation. Integrating all this new staff will take some time as the ongoing staff helps us understand how our gifts fit with theirs in resourcing the congregation's ministries. We ask your patience and support as we learn our way around.

As Interim Pastor, my task is to work with the Session and church staff in the interval between your last and your next installed pastor in order to provide continuity of leadership, especially in worship. I will also be working with the Self Study committee as it undertakes its crucial tasks of comprehending the congregation's history, clarifying its identity, and beginning to discern God's vision for the future ministry of the congregation. This is an area in which I have worked with other congregations, and I believe it will bear important fruit for our common life, especially as such a study has not been done for quite a few years. The completion of the Self Study will not only tell us a great deal about ourselves, it will also provide the basis for beginning the search for your next pastor.

Transitions – whether somewhat routine like the beginning of school or dramatic like the pulling up roots and moving to Ann Arbor to begin an interim pastorate – are demanding at many levels. My wife Pat and I have had an intense few weeks getting ready to begin this new chapter in our life (and may become catatonic if confronted with packing boxes any time soon!). But those weeks are ended, and we are now ever so excited to see what God shall bring into our lives in this new context. We're glad to be among you.

A prayer to share:

O God of ancient ways and every new beginning, You tell us again and again of your work to create something new. Open us to wonder and possibility and ever greater service as You unfold our future in your kingdom. Grant us the courage we see in Jesus to embrace the path that is ours, and the wisdom to discern your work among us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen +

See you in church!

Grace and peace,

*Jany Farris*