

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

October 8, 2007

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We're writing in order to encourage you at a time when there has been uncertainty and anxiety among the people of our church. We're assured that, even in the midst of our struggles, God is at work, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jer. 29:11, NRSV).

We ask that you uphold us in your prayers. We also ask for your patience as we seek to discern God's will and lead accordingly. A number of people have expressed concern that the members of Session seem aloof or inaccessible. We desire to be more available and communicative, and we're working to open channels of better dialog and interaction. We thank all of you who have taken time to "speak the truth in love," expressing your concerns, questions, emotions, support, and ideas. May the Lord grant us honesty, grace, and respect in the way we speak and listen to each other.

One of the first steps taken this fall to address serious concerns at NPC was an officers' retreat on September 8. Elders, trustees, deacons, and pastors spent the morning in prayer, reflection, and discussion in small groups and as a body. Senior Pastor Gareth Icenogle moderated the time together, and Dr. Peter James of Vienna Presbyterian Church observed. At the end of the morning, Dr. James gave encouragement and issued challenges based on what was discussed.

One change that has already taken place in order to improve communications is that a summary of Session discussion now appears on the church website and in the bulletin for each Sunday following a Session meeting. The full minutes are available about a month later in the Culbertson Library and Satellite Library. Watch in the coming months for an announcement and guidelines regarding the periodic opening of Session meetings for members of the congregation to attend as observers.

Another opportunity to listen to one another will be the Fall Congregational Meeting at 12:15 p.m. on October 21. After a brief business meeting, we will spend about an hour in reflection and discussion around tables, following the model of the officers' retreat mentioned above. Lunch and childcare will be available. Please make plans to be part of that time together.

In preparation for that meeting, and as a means of seeking the Lord's guidance for our church, Session has called for a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Saturday, October 20. This will be preceded by a special worship service on Friday, October 19, at 7 p.m., a time of prayer, contemplation and communion in the chapel. The chapel will be open on Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and officers will be present to lead in scriptural meditation and prayer. Those who are able to make it a day of fasting are invited to do so. All are urged to unite in praying for our church during this 24-hour period, either by spending time in the chapel or by joining in prayer wherever you are.

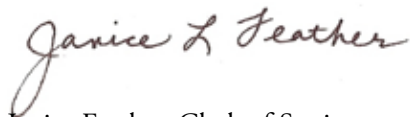
One of the possibilities Session is considering as a tool to help move our church forward is bringing in a consultant to help us develop a more accurate view of the issues, a better understanding of the congregation, and better ways of communicating with one another. One of the tools a consultant would use would be a congregational assessment. Whether or not we hire such a person, we would like to give everyone the opportunity immediately to respond to a very brief questionnaire, which will help clarify some of the matters we want to address. Session will read and prayerfully consider each response, weighing the feedback as we set priorities, lead, communicate, and pray for our church.

Please take time to answer the questions on the enclosed sheet. You may bring your responses with you to the Fall Meeting or turn them in to the receptionist in the Administration Building or to mail them to Janice Feather, Clerk of Session at the address below.

We're grateful for—and humbled by—the trust you've placed in us to be your leaders. We want you to know that we're listening to you and looking to the Lord as we do our best to make decisions that will glorify him and lead our church in the direction he wants us to go. As together we seek God's glory in our church, may we keep in mind Paul's exhortations to the Philip-

pians to be “like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose,” to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than [our]selves” and to “look not only to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others” (see Phil. 2:2-4).

Yours in Christ,



Janice Feather, Clerk of Session
on behalf of all the members of Session

Paul ARVESON – Strategic Plan Implementation
Gretchen ASMUTH – Chair - Nurture Pillar
Peter BACKLUND – Nominating Committee
Barbara BEHR – Denominational Issues
Angela BOUMA – Adult Nurture
Joyce BRORS – Women’s Ministry
Al DUNCKER – Care Ministries Council/Prayer Ministries
Mark ERICKSON – Chair - NPC & Me/Connections in Ministry & Mission
Janice FEATHER – Clerk of Session
John FREEMAN – Sacraments
Lewrene GLASER – Chair- Mission Council
Lynne GOCHNOUR – Children’s Ministries
Glenna HENDRICKS – Evangelism
Virginia JARRATT – Marriage Ministry
Alease JOHNSON – Older Adult Ministry
Jim LINK – Music Council
Jan MAHUMED – Coordinating Cmte/Leadership Development/Hospitality
Kathryn MORGAN – Chair – Worship Pillar
Jane PALMER – Nurture Resources/Library/Bookstore
Richard PARKER – Stewardship
Keith PATMAN - Communications
Jen PERRY – Connections in Ministry & Mission
David SCHOTTKE – Chair - Nominating Committee
David THOMPSON – Youth Ministries
Lora TREDWAY – Chair - Personnel
David WALLACE – Chair – Outreach Pillar
David ZWEIFEL – Personnel