



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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September 29, 2013

To my First Presbyterian family:

Over the years, you've received many letters from me. But this is the hardest one I've ever had to write.

I need to share some changes in store for me, my family, and this church. At their congregational meeting after their 11am worship this morning, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlotte extended me a call to be their next Pastor/Head of Staff. I informed our session and staff this afternoon and evening. My last Sunday at First Presbyterian will be November 3rd, and my last day in the office will be Tuesday, November 5th.

I know this is hard news to share in a letter, and I wish I could've told you in person. But I didn't want to wait until this coming Sunday - news like this has a way of growing wings quickly, and because I value my relationship with you I wanted to do everything I could to enable you to hear it from me first.

While there is great excitement about this new chapter in our family's life, the emotion I am most aware of as I write this is the grief that Lorie, Connor, Hunter and I feel in leaving you. How could I ever put into words the past ten and a half years? Together we have partnered in ministry at the corner of Church and Main and done wonderful things with God's help. Mount Airy is the only home our boys have known, and both were baptized in this church. Our dearest friends live here. We are rooted in this church and community, and leaving you will be one of the hardest things I've ever had to do.

And yet we feel God's call leading us to Charlotte and Trinity, in the same way God's call brought us here in 2003. So as we prepare for this transition, I am acutely aware of the gift of time. And I want to cherish that time with you - to say goodbyes, to laugh and cry, and to serve God together to the very last minute. During that time I will be fully committed to my pastoral duties, the transitional work ahead, and seeing our Fall Discipleship season to its successful completion on Dedication Sunday, Oct. 20th.

You may be wondering what comes next. This Sunday, the session will meet with a representative from Salem Presbytery. As I work with the session to secure temporary pastoral help after my departure, Salem will work with a to-be-determined transitional committee to hire an interim minister and help you eventually call your next pastor (and what a lucky man or woman they will be!) You will not be alone in this process - and that comforts me, as I hope it comforts you.

My beloved FPC family - I am truly humbled and awed to have been your pastor. I trust you know this. It will be painful saying goodbye, but it is only because of my deep affection for you. I am a better pastor and better person because we've served together. And I am absolutely convinced that the church's brightest days are yet to come. Wherever God leads, you will always - always - be near to my heart!

With deepest gratitude and love,