



November 20, 2024

Dear Fellow Members and Friends of First Presbyterian Church,

For those of you who came to the potluck supper on Sunday, November 17, some of the following will be redundant, but I hope you will read this entire letter. I suspect that the primary reason most of you are involved with and contribute to this church is because you believe in its mission as a downtown church. One of the areas in which we have a visible reputation is to advocate for those of our neighbors who cannot advocate for themselves. You may have been looking for a church where you could join with fellow church members to meet the needs of those who are less fortunate than we.

More than 40 years ago my late husband, George, and I looked for a church home and settled on this one for a number of reasons, among which were the quality of the sermons and the music. But the reputation of First Presbyterian as a church that was involved in the community played a huge role in our decision. It's a good thing that was a factor because within a matter of weeks after we made our decision, the senior pastor at that time, Bruce Robertson, resigned. We stayed. We became active contributors to the programs here. We got involved with the Youth Ministry before the church had a full time DCE. We became friends with other members who came and went. Many of those who mentored us in our early years here have left or joined the church triumphant, but a few are still members of the church. Many of them held me close when we lost George. I stayed. This church and the committed members I call friends have made this my home. My point is this — we the members ARE First Presbyterian Church. We determine the nature of the church. Circumstances change but we have been able to preserve the dedication to mission and the resilience that has defined us through the years.

We have had our ups and our downs. Since 2019 we have been through a few rocky years, but we are still here. David Strange and Don Winstead have helped us understand our financial situation. Our interim pastor, Anne Apple, led us through an ambitious stewardship campaign last year, and your generous pledges and contributions have put the church operations on a sound footing. That is certainly reason for joy, but we are not done yet. Our Pastor Nominating Committee, currently looking for our next pastor, needs to know what kind of salary they can offer a new candidate. Glenn Hodges has been serving us as a part-time minister and the budget that we will be building for the coming year, based on your pledges, will need to cover a larger operating budget that provides for a full-time minister.

Enclosed you will find a pledge card which we ask that you return on Stewardship Dedication Sunday, December 1 (or as soon thereafter as possible). I pray that you will give generously to our "Finding Joy" campaign to fund the budget for 2025.

Yours in Christ,

*Norma Meier*

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)*