



SALEM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

April 26, 2023

Dear Family & Friends,

The Tuesday after Easter, I boarded a plane with my wife, Heidi, bound for Birmingham, Alabama for a “unique travel experience [that] introduces practices that embrace our shared humanity and bridge across differences.” with Empower Initiative. The leaders at Empower Initiative stressed that the wrong first question is, “What do I need to do?” A better first question is “Who do I need to become?”

As I continue to deepen my relationship with SFPC as your senior pastor, as we look ahead to the coming challenges and opportunities set before us I want to ask you the question, who does Salem First Presbyterian Church need to become to continue to be faithful to God’s call on us as a congregation and as individuals?

We are becoming a safe and welcoming space for our houseless relatives, we are becoming a place where people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, orientations, economics, and histories feel welcome and belonging. Our trust in God and the guidance by the Holy Spirit continues to lead us into new places and continues to challenge us to think differently and act differently than our forebearers have in the past.

If we are to live wholeheartedly into this new becoming, this re-enlivening, this reconnection we will enter a time of prayer and discernment in worship and at home to listen to how the Spirit is calling us to contribute to this call on our congregation and our own lives. Your faithful gifts of time, talent, and money will help ensure that we can continue to exhibit the kingdom of Heaven here on Earth just as we have over the last 154 years.

After much prayer and conversation, Heidi and I believe in the work and call of this congregation so much that we are increasing our monthly pledge by 10%. We are blessed to be in a position to do this and we encourage you to pray, to reflect, and to discern how you might increase your pledge this year. Is that time? Is that sharing your talent in new ways? Is that increasing your financial contribution? Is that naming SFPC as a beneficiary in your estate? There are many ways that you can contribute to SFPC

A full inclusion community of ordinary people experiencing and embodying God's extraordinary love

continuing to become the place we believe God has called us to be. No gift is too small, no gift is unappreciated, our goal is that 100% of our members, friends, and community contribute to in some way to Salem First Presbyterian Church living into its vision as a full inclusion community of ordinary people embodying and experiencing God's extraordinary love.

Over the next four weeks you will have several opportunities to learn more about what is going on at SFPC and how you may be involved. In addition to this letter, we intend to have stories from several of our members about why they are a part of this congregation, you should receive another letter telling about all of the wonderful things that your time, talents, and finances have made possible over the last year and our hopes for the future (this letter will include your pledge card for the next fiscal year), there will so be a Budget Q & A Forum following worship on May 14 for those that are looking for a comprehensive picture of our budget, and finally, May 21 will be Commitment Sunday were you will invited to return your pledge card as we celebrate God's faithfulness to us and our trust in God.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I cannot wait to see who we become, together.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg West", written in a cursive style.

Pastor Greg