



*We aspire to be beacons of God's love and truth ...*

November 10, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of FPC Moorestown:

"May you live in interesting times."

This ancient proverb is considered a curse; something you'd wish upon an enemy. Interesting times are by definition uncertain and usually unfamiliar. Cursed or not, we're living in interesting times. Consider:

- We're still adjusting to post-pandemic life.
- In the past twenty years, some forty million people have left the church. That's the greatest movement of people in American church history.
- We're trying to figure out how to offer our numerous, wonderful programs in a community where busy families live in fifth gear.
- A year ago, we learned of new financial challenges. Some of our strongest givers have had to face a significant downshift in their giving while other givers completed their earthly race and now dwell among the heavenly cloud of witnesses.

Interesting times . . .

In the spring, Session decided to lean into these times; however, instead of considering it a curse, Session saw these challenges as an opportunity to evaluate, assess, and grow. I am grateful for our faithful leaders who know and desire to follow our Lord, who reigns over every season and time. In these interesting times God remains faithful. Today, you are invited to respond to God's faithfulness and participate in the work of the Holy Spirit to address the challenges before us - challenges ripe with opportunities to increase our faith, grow the Kingdom, and ensure the long-term sustainability of First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown until Christ returns.

To address these interesting times, Session borrowed a page from our pandemic playbook and asked laity, staff and our three leadership boards to address two important concerns. The first concern addressed how we can help our congregation become active disciples who then go out and make disciples for Jesus. The second concern addressed how we can find and maintain financial sustainability.

This resulted in the creation of six workgroups charged with evaluating various aspects of

First Presbyterian Church's vision and mission. Each workgroup was asked to reflect on the following question:

1. Team One, how can we encourage more participation in the "normal" life of our church?
2. Team Two, how can we grow participation in Outreach Programs?
3. Team Three, how can we better welcome visitors into the life of our congregation?
4. Team Four, how can we "meet and greet" those in our community who haven't yet found us?
5. Team Five, how can we increase financial support of our mission and ministry?
6. Team Six, what's God's future for FPC Moorestown for the coming 3-5 years?

Work groups met from May through August. Participation and engagement were impressive! At the end of August, Session received their reports in a 15-page report. From thirty recommendations for action, Session voted to act immediately on six priorities and planned for further action in 2024. I'm deeply grateful for the time and energy these good leaders offered; and I especially appreciate the leadership for *Grow the Kingdom* by Elder Paul Grossmann, chair of our Long Range Planning Committee.

You're invited to a Town Hall Meeting on **Sunday, November 26** during the Education Hour in Fellowship Hall (10:15-11:15 am). There, you'll hear more about these *Grow the Kingdom* initiatives. Your questions, thoughts and ideas will be most welcome.

Let's seek the Lord together in prayer for these interesting, wonderful times.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Stuart Spencer  
Pastor