

Parish Week

The Newsletter Of

Faith Presbyterian Church

5400 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21239-2998
410-435-4330

July 23, 1999



The Rev. Corinne Baker Will End Her Interim Pastoring At Faith Church On Sunday, August 8, 1999



The Rev. Corinne Baker, who has served Faith Church as Interim Pastor since April 1, 1997, will conclude her ministry at Faith on Sunday, August 8, 1999. A reception for Pastor Baker will be held in Fellowship Hall immediately after the worship service on the

8th and everyone is invited to come and bid her farewell.

In a tribute to Pastor Baker and her ministry at Faith, Elder David Ross stated, "Faith Church is deeply indebted to and will long remember its first interim pastor, the Reverend Corinne Baker....During the more than two years she has been with us, she has truly been our pastor, not merely a fill-in for the interim. We have bonded and her departure will be difficult for us ...

"And we are deeply grateful for all that you have done for us. You have seen and called forth the best in us. That we are reading this *Parish Week* is possible because of your fulfillment of our request to increase communication within the congregation. We asked a number of things of you when you were called and you have delivered on all of them. You have motivated and prodded us and as a result we are a much stronger and more faithful congregation of followers of Jesus Christ.

"You led us through the self-examining Percept process culminating in a highly successful and rewarding all church retreat. We asked you to reorganize and strengthen the church office. You led the organization of the office volunteers and the employment of a Parish Administrator...We asked you to increase home visitation. You quickly developed and maintained a

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Interim Interludes

The Rev. Corinne Baker, Pastor

Well, the time has come for us to say goodbye. We all knew this day would come when I came to you as your interim pastor 27 months ago. What we didn't know then is what hills and bumps lay ahead. You wondered what was so unique about the in-between-installed-pastor-time that calls for a specially trained type of minister called an Interim Pastor. "Can't we just get a new minister as soon as possible, like we used to?" "In my business, if we want a new CEO, we just go out and get one!"

Now that we are on this end of our journey, perhaps a few discoveries have been made along the way that might give us a different perspective. Have you ever noticed that one of the most difficult parts of being alive is to learn to live with uncertainty, that is with ambiguity? While ambiguity is part of everyday life, yet another part of our human condition seeks equilibrium, balance, stability. We like predictability, the familiar. When we have a change in pastoral leadership, it is a natural response to seek to fill that empty spot quickly to avoid facing uncertainty and yet more change, another ambiguity in the one place we don't expect it, in the life of Christ's Church.

Here is where the calling of a pastor in a church differs from the hiring of a new CEO. The *community of faith* is *different* from any other gathering of folk. God calls all of us, including pastors, into ministry to model the love and service of Jesus Christ. In the business world the emphasis on profit is really only the nature of the standard by which effectiveness is measured, which is not analogous to the way the faithfulness of the church is measured. We are *not* called to downsize, cut corners, speed up production, be better than all other products, produce the best packaging, or win the contest for the most creative commercial. But, we are called to **be community**, to hold up and bring out the best in one another, to stand beside each other in solidarity, not in front of or behind. We are called to be community where respect for others and their viewpoints is given the highest priority, where a prayerful, humble heart overcomes an insistence on "doing it my way," where being last in line feels as good as beating someone to the front of the line, where the weakest, most quiet voice has the same standing as the strongest most outspoken one.

Why? Because we are stakeholders and the one whose stake is the greatest is Christ. A session is not analogous to a board of directors; members of a congregation are not analogous to shareholders; as a pastor is not analogous to a CEO; but *all* together we are the Christian community. The church is the body of Christ, here and now; members, elders, deacons, clergy are all stakeholders, and the measure of our effectiveness as a church is our faithfulness to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Yes, building a community with shared participation and vision, takes ongoing time, patience and more patience -- a realization that the Holy Spirit is the

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Interim Interludes (Continued from column one)

initiator and designer.

I pray that this interim period somehow knocked at your door of resistance as it did mine, as together our horizon of God's limitless love and energy to bring hope, purpose and new life was engaged. Now, as you continue building community, I pray for your cooperative future, where problems develop into opportunities, where listening to your neighbor's ideas become as important and valid as speaking about your own. I pray that "I can't," "I don't have," "I don't know how," "I'm too busy," are scratched forever from your vocabularies. I pray that many more of you join in the building of Faith's community as all engage in a continuous, encircling, living relationship with God and others. I pray that earnest study and fervent prayer will provide quiet, non-judgmental reflective moments of discernment.

Back to living with ambiguity! Human uncertainty always remains because the measure of the Church's effectiveness -- faithfulness -- is **not** visible to us. We live in hope! We live trusting in the leading of God's Holy Spirit.

Goodbyes are a natural part of God's pattern as one door is closed and another is opened. I have felt especially blessed that God opened your door and called me to be your pastor during this sojourn, and now as we close what I like to think of as a thicker and sturdier door, and both open new doors to the future, I celebrate God's movement in our midst during our time together. I will follow lovingly and yes, even proudly, the continued unfolding of Christ's presence in your community and beyond. Oh, yes, don't forget, even God likes a party, so take time to *play together* with large measures of light-hearted humor and fun! You are always close to my heart and in my prayers. I cherish each and every relationship, your creative talents and your faith in God. For the last time, love from your pastor,

Corinne

Pastor Baker's Farewell

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program for visiting the homebound and increased pastoral care for the ill and grieving. We asked you to develop lay leadership, and you have increased the involvement and fervor of those with leadership and potential. You have given not only what we requested, but much more. Your work with the youth has been exceptional. Starting with the confirmation class and then the organization of the Youth Council, you have molded the young people into a cohesive group of disciples who genuinely appreciate each other and their faith journey together ... an inspiration to the entire congregation ... Corinne, we will miss you."

PLAN AHEAD

Planning Picnic Provides Pleasurable Party Plus Plenty Profitable Program Possibilities

Almost forty persons attended and participated in the very successful planning picnic at the home of Ron and Judy Sperling on July 11. The fine food, good fellowship and gracious hospitality were greatly enjoyed by all. Dates for the coming church year events, program activities and worship occasions were entered on a tentative church calendar and during the discussion, led by Elder John Geist, many excellent ideas were contributed by spirited participants.

The ideas will be forwarded to the appropriate church committees for further consideration in planning Faith's future programs. A number of church members who had not taken part in previous planning events joined in the talks and added to the day's pleasure and achievements. Faith's Pastor Elect, the Rev. Robin White, was on hand as an observer.

**14th Presbyterian Church
5400 Loch Raven Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21239-2998**

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