

***A Report to the Congregation of Southport Presbyterian Church and to the
Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery of Whitewater Valley based on
Listening Sessions with the Presbytery of Whitewater Valley
(Summary Statements)***

The committee would like to report to both Southport Presbyterian Church and to the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry that the process of this committee has been, throughout, collegial, mutually respectful, and bathed with prayer. It is our profound hope that both parties will faithfully continue to respect each other, to pray for each other, and to treat each other with kindness and forbearance, by the witness of Matthew 18 and in the example of Jesus Christ.

Summary Statements:

Impressions

- There is no evidence of significant division amongst this congregation or the non-clergy staff members serving it.
- There seems to be a high degree of confidence in the Session – certainly we found no evidence that the active Elders are out of sync with the general mood of the congregation.
- The conflict seems framed, for this congregation, as one of core values – specifically, the authority of Scripture and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- The members of this committee representing Southport Presbyterian Church wish to state that we believe that the discernment process of the representatives of Whitewater Valley Presbytery with respect to our future relationship with PCUSA, as evidenced by this time and process of discernment, has been thorough, careful, and prayerful and, to date, they have abided by the standards of the *Guidelines for Discernment* as published by our Presbytery in 2007.
- The members of this committee representing the Presbytery wish to state that we believe that the discernment process of this congregation and its Session with respect to its future relationship with PCUSA, as evidenced by this time and process of mutual discernment, has been thorough, careful, and prayerful and, to date, they have abided by the standards of the *Guidelines for Discernment* as published by our Presbytery in 2007.

Summary Statements:

Recommendations

- Just as it is important for the members of the Presbytery to have a fuller understanding of the breadth of ministry and mission of Southport Presbyterian Church as we attempt to honor the future and call of that congregation, so is it worthwhile that the Presbytery have ample opportunity to provide a fuller vision of its ministry and mission before final dispositions and decisions are made.

Therefore, three congregational forums have been scheduled at Southport Presbyterian Church as venues for the Presbytery to present its ministry and mission in any way it so chooses. These will occur

on Wednesday, October 14 at 7:00 p.m.; on Sunday, October 18 at 3:00p.m.; and on Tuesday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m.

- This committee recommends that the Committee on Ministry (and the Coordinating Council) agree to allow a congregational vote to occur during the weekend worship services at Southport Presbyterian Church on November 14/15. (A full description of the process of said vote will follow shortly)
- As is stated in the Whitewater Valley Presbytery's *Guidelines for Discernment 2007* document: "If the Presbytery and the congregation together conclude that a substantial majority of the congregation are determined to separate from the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbytery shall commit itself to a faithful and equitable process through which the congregation may be dismissed to another denomination."
- We strongly encourage that both sides continue to honor their commitment to mutual blessing, respectful dialogue, and the highest standards of ethical and moral behavior throughout this process.