



The Rev. Cheryl Barton Henry  
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Durham, NC 27701

October 13, 2019

Rev. Dr. Mindy Douglas, Moderator  
First Presbyterian Church Session  
305 E. Main Street  
Durham, NC 27701

Dearest First Presbyterian Church Session and Congregation,

The Gospel of John reminds us that we all wear two watches. One watch is the sort that we check our wrists to see chronological time as it passes by in a steady beat of seconds and minutes and hours. The other watch is an invisible, internal, and episodic one. On it we keep the turning point events of our lives; the times when God takes us from here to there, from this to that. Taken together these two watches tell the story of our lives before our Maker and hopefully are a good way for me to try to explain to you my discernment of God's time in my life and the implications it has for our life together.

During my 2017 Sabbatical as Andy and Sam and I walked El Camino, I strongly sensed that the times of my life and living were on the cusp of change. I knew nothing was immediately changing. Sam still had two more years of High School. Andy was satisfied with his work. I was still feeling productive in the work I was doing and appreciated all the many and varied worlds in which my roles as a part-time Pastor at Efland Presbyterian, part-time Parish Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian, and a Spiritual Formation Leader at Duke Divinity School put me. I oftentimes felt I had the best of all worlds: Rural and urban, children, youth, younger and more mature adults, conservative, moderate, progressive, small and larger communities of faith. I was a big fish in some ponds and a small one in others. It was all very interesting and fed my curiosity and creativity. Still, along with the steady passing of the days, as I looked further ahead, I could see a needed turn in the road coming. Not only was I longing to have my work more centrally located, but I could also hear the Spirit calling to me that it was TIME. Time to put my 32 years of ministry experience, an empty-nest (more time!), and my good health (3 miles of walking a day) to another good use.

Today, I write to tell you that both my watches are telling me that the turn in the road is here. It is with joy that I write to tell you that I have received and accepted a new call to ministry as the Associate Pastor of Congregational Care and Outreach at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Durham, NC. This, of course, means that I am also sad to tell you that as of Sunday, October 27, I must respectfully ask you to terminate my position at First Presbyterian Church as your Parish Associate Pastor.

This is naturally bittersweet when I consider how I will no longer be a part of FPC's life with the regularity of that first watch. However, as my second watch reminds me, FPC will continue to be part of my story. FPC is where Andy and I were married and have found so many lifelong friends. It is the place where Sam was baptized, where Abi and Sam were confirmed, and where Abi and Derek were married. None of this will change on my second watch. And some things will not change on our family's first watch either. Andy will continue to serve as a Ruling Elder here at FPC. He along with Abi and Sam will keep their membership at FPC for as long as they feel called by God to do so. It is also true that we are not moving from Durham, so I know that we'll be bumping into each other all over town!

Please know that I consider it a privilege to have served as one of your pastors. And though I am aware that I am now the third pastor you will lose in the next 3 months, I am greatly comforted to know that you are in good hands with Mindy at the helm and John by her side. Scripture reminds us that "for everything, there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3.1) and that "we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8.28). Thank you, thank you, thank you, for all that you have meant, mean, and will continue to mean to me as the two watches of my life tick on.

Courage and faith,

Cherrie