

On November 14<sup>th</sup> our congregation voted to begin the process outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding with Summerlin Presbyterian Church which charges both congregations and their leadership to begin working together, sharing resources and to consider the possibility of a future merger. This was a difficult decision for our congregation. The issues of our identity and history, as well as the challenges of an uncertain future, remain unsettling for many. The question that we face in regards to this decision is; what does this decision mean for us as a congregation?

In response I want to assure the congregation of First Presbyterian Church that we are, and will remain, the church of Jesus Christ. We are a Christ centered congregation and we are committed to continuing our ministry in the name of Jesus. We are the family of God and our family has just gotten a little bigger. This is an okay thing. Our doors have always been open to those who confess Jesus as Lord. In the process outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding it is my understanding that initially, little will change for our church family. Our leadership will meet with the Summerlin leadership and we will invite the congregation of Summerlin Presbyterian Church to our events. Additionally, we will be invited to the events and programs of the Summerlin congregation. As our churches grow closer and we become family, we will continue to share resources and experiences.

In the New Year our staff will manage worship services at both locations. Pastors Jim and Dana will share the preaching responsibilities at each location while the worship services at each location will remain unchanged. The combined leadership teams will work together to find ways to help the congregations blend together and grow as one family within the Christian community. The process is expected to be lengthy and the congregations can look forward to an extended period of outreach and shared ministry. Any decisions concerning a merge or involving significant property matters will be brought to the congregations for input and a vote.

This is an exciting time in the life of our church. The Spirit of God is working and we can look forward to miraculous things. I hope you will be in prayer for our congregation and our church family as we grow. I hope you will continue to be involved with an attitude of expectation. Change may be difficult and the future uncertain, but we know that God is in charge. We also know that when God is in charge miracles happen.

Pastor Jim