



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SAN ANTONIO

LIVING TO MAKE JESUS VISIBLE

March 10, 2015

Dear members and friends of FPC,

Today I write to you with a heavy heart. The action taken by Mission Presbytery last Saturday (specifically voting to affirm the PCUSA General Assembly's recommendation that marriage be redefined as being "between two people" rather than the current "between one man and one woman") has inflicted wounds across our presbytery. This "redefinition" is expected to pass at the national level, thus not only redefine what marriage is, but also Who God is. I am extremely concerned that these GA and presbytery actions, external to our congregation, threaten to further tear the already-fragile fabric of individual churches across the land and the entire denomination as a whole. This letter is being written to assure you that your Session and pastoral staff are not in agreement with these actions by Mission Presbytery and the larger PCUSA.

This action by Mission Presbytery and the GA is only one of many symptoms that indicate that the PCUSA is in a continual drift away from her Biblical/Reformed theological moorings; moorings that are clearly laid out in Scripture and our Book of Confessions.

In regard to matters of human sexuality, I am far more concerned about what appears to be a lack of certainty by the denomination concerning the Person and Work of Christ (i.e. that Jesus is fully God/fully man, that He alone is Savior, the necessity of the cross, His bodily resurrection, etc.) and a lack of confidence in the Scriptures as truly being the inspired, infallible Word of God — our supreme authority for what we are to believe and how we are to live our lives. That lack is what is leading to actions like those taken last Saturday by Mission Presbytery.

I want to assure you that FPC will remain faithful to the Scriptures, and to our Presbyterian Book of Confessions, especially regarding the issue of what constitutes marriage in God's sight. Action taken by you at a congregational meeting in January changed our by-laws to explicitly ensure that any and all marriages at FPC will only be between one man and one woman who are followers of Jesus Christ.

Your Session will continue to do everything we can to pursue the peace, unity and purity of FPC in the face of these external forces. Part of that will involve deepening our commitment to The Fellowship, and exploring other partnerships that will connect us with kindred spirits in the larger Body of Christ; in order to ensure that we remain a Christ-centered, Biblically orthodox, disciple-making, missions-driven congregation — a congregation that majors in vibrant worship and life-transforming servanthood ministries that take the Gospel of grace to the least, the last and the lost.

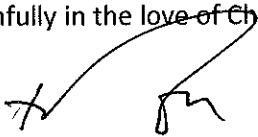
That said, I also want to assure you that we will remain a place of grace, where anyone and everyone is welcome to come through our doors and worship with us, as well as participate in the life and mission of our congregation. We are merely a "hospital for sinners," all of us are in need of a Savior. Though the Lord loves and accepts all of us unconditionally as we are, we believe He loves us too much to leave us that way. Thus, He calls you and me to lifestyles that attempt to move toward what is His best for our lives, in every area of our lives.

We ask that you pray for, and trust your Session as we attempt to navigate this current whitewater and what this may mean concerning the future of FPC. Be assured that our utmost loyalty will, as always, remain with Jesus Christ and His Word.

I am convinced that the Lord's Hand is upon our congregation in many and amazing ways, and that He is calling us to be a Gospel light in center-city San Antonio, a beacon to the entire world, and an alternative to churches and denominations around us that appear to be plunging head-long into a cultural captivity that puts them at odds with what God has revealed, through His Word, to be His best for our lives and those we minister to and with. The Lord's Hand is clearly on the helm of FPC, therefore I encourage our entire congregation to move forward together with a gracious and loving spirit. Doing so in faith, not in fear.

If you have any questions and/or concerns please feel free to contact me. I'd love to meet with you and talk with you about them.

Faithfully in the love of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Scates', written over the closing text.

Ron Scates
Interim Senior Pastor