



A PLACE TO WORSHIP IN COMMUNITY



A letter from Pastor Steve

Dear friends,

Attached you will find a letter that Rebekah Abel Lamar, our Associate Pastor for Christian Formation, submitted to the session on Sunday afternoon announcing her resignation in order to become the Pastor of the Government Street Presbyterian Church in Mobile.

I can well imagine the shock and surprise that some of you are feeling, following closely on the heels of my retirement and the resignation of Margaret Burnett that we announced last week, so let me add a few thoughts.

Most people forget that when I came here 19 years ago, there were no other associates, and the pastoral help we had came from Corinne Adams Neinhuis, who was the Commissioned Lay Pastor. I will always be indebted to her. Shortly after I came here, this congregation took a bold step to add an Associate Pastor for Adult Ministry, and God sent us Gayle Walker, who built our adult ministries to a level I never would have dreamed possible, including opening the doors to the wider faith communities of Muslims and Jews in particular.

To me, the highest compliment one can have as a pastor is to build upon the strengths of one's predecessor, and that is what Rebekah has done. She has not only strengthened our adult offerings, but has put all the Christian Formation units under one umbrella, from the nursery through children's ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, and adults.

When we first called Rebekah, we knew to a certain degree who we were getting: a person nurtured in the faith with a strong expertise in Christian Formation. We knew we were getting an incredible young woman who, in 10 years, got married, completed seminary, worked in a PC(USA) church, and HAD THREE KIDS!!

What we didn't know, but became apparent immediately, was her appreciation for new scholarship in bible study, her willingness to try new things, her solid preaching, and her wisdom which often astounded me. She has the unique gift of listening and then being able to summarize all we have heard. Rebekah has not only been a "non-anxious presence" on the staff, but has done that in a way that it is a joy to be around her.

She is the one who organized the cleaning out of the Jones building and setting up of all our classes in the 1928 building, a herculean task. And she will be here helping us move back into the building in the next month! She makes this task, and all ministry tasks, seem so effortless.

You also need to know that the Government Street Presbyterian Church is one of the leading PC(USA) churches in the South. It, like Idlewild, has a treasured history, and it is comforting to know that it will be in the steady and faithful hands of Rebekah.

As with Margaret's resignation, the session will call a congregational meeting to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Idlewild and Rebekah so that she might accept the call to the Government Street Church.

I grieve with you, but rejoice that God sent her here, and are thankful for the four years she has had with us. I also rejoice for our sister congregation in Mobile. And I rejoice that God will continue to lead this congregation into the future, just as surely as God has led us thus far.

Our prayers will certainly be with Rebekah and her family, Ashley, Sam, Ann Thomas, and James, as they follow where God has led them. And I ask your prayers for the Pastor Nominating Committee, the session, and for the entire congregation, that we might be led with the sure and certain confidence of God's steadfast love for us all.

Grace and peace,

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Steve

[Rebekah's letter](#)

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