



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN EVANSTON

March 8, 2023

Dear Friends and Members of First Pres,

On February 15, Rev. Dr. Raymond Hylton announced to the congregation his plans to resign from his position as Senior Pastor effective April 17, 2023. His letter, sent via email, is attached.

This announcement came as a surprise to many, and some have expressed a concern that he and Judith are leaving for reasons other than what he has stated. This is not the case. For some time, Ray and Judith have been prayerfully seeking God's guidance for what their next steps might be. Even as we are saddened by their leaving, we rejoice with them and with the church family they will be joining. We trust that just as God has graciously led them to a new place, we can be equally confident He will lead us at First Pres to where He is guiding us, bringing us the right person to be our new Senior Pastor.

This past week, the Session took the first steps needed to fill the position of an Interim Senior Pastor before a called Senior Pastor is selected. A Session transitional task force was approved to oversee some of the activities involved and to handle communications with the congregation regarding the Interim Pastor search process. Those elders are Laurie Kaeser, Jerry Gabrielse, Suzanne Sawada, Richard Bell, and LeRoy Klemt. This transitional task force is not the search committee for the called Senior Pastor.

In brief, our First Pres Session will need to accomplish the following in the weeks ahead:

- Provide regular and effective communications with the congregation about the search process.
- Plan an appropriate celebration for Pastor Ray and Judith to take place on his final day on staff, Sunday, April 16, 2023.
- Complete a preliminary Ministry Information Form (MIF) which is required as part of an Interim Pastor search. A more complete MIF is needed for the called Senior Pastor search and requires prayerful examination of who we are as a church and where God is leading us.
- Identify appropriate individuals as pulpit supply preachers for Sunday morning worship services in the event that an Interim Pastor is not selected immediately after Rev. Hylton leaves.
- Delegate the Personnel Ministry Council (PMC) to attend staff meetings during the transition period so communication and collaboration are maintained.

It should be understood that the Interim (transitional) Pastor is selected by the Session. Once that person has been called, we as a congregation will enter a time of discernment, seeking to identify the gifts and strengths of the Senior Pastor we will eventually call to lead First Pres. A Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), representative of our church members, will be elected by the congregation and they will begin the process of searching for our next Senior Pastor.

A web page has been created on our website where current information about the process can be found. It is located at <https://firstpresevanston.org/pastoral-transition/>. And, of course, you can always contact any of the elders with questions you might have.

We encourage all our members and regular attendees to join us as we pray for God's presence and to listen for His guidance and direction.

Joyfully yours,

Laurie Kaeser, Elder and Personnel Ministry Council, Chair  
LeRoy Klemt, Clerk of Session