

November 15, 2011

Dear Langhorne Presbyterian Friends and Family,

Last July our Presbyterian Church (USA) began a new chapter in its life marked by the passage of a new Form of Government, our denominational constitution, and a new understanding of the standards for ordination as pastor, elder or deacon.

You may remember that the new understanding of ordination standards removed the previous call for “fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness.” A more disconcerting change speaks of standards for ordination, but mandates a case by case application of those standards; that is, on any given day any one of our more than 10,000 sessions may exempt a candidate for elder or deacon from meeting any standard of belief or behavior, and any one of our 173 may likewise exempt a candidate seeking ordination as a teaching elder (pastor).

As they have written you during the summer, our elders are concerned with these changes.

But our new Form of Government also declares the individual congregation to be “the basic form of the church,” with its life guided and governed by its elected elders serving on the session. It calls for the councils of the church, including individual sessions, to “frame statements of faith.”

Desiring to differentiate Langhorne Presbyterian Church with its rich history of strong faith and clear sense of mission and ministry from an increasingly confused and confusing denomination, our elders have responded by framing a statement of faith. Like all good statements of faith, our new Langhorne Presbyterian Church Statement of Faith tells ourselves, the larger church and the world at our doorstep what we believe and what we intend do.

Our Statement of Faith is enclosed in this mailing. I encourage you to read it, study it and give thanks for it! I think it is a powerful and clear declaration, and am proud to claim it as a joyful statement of who we are at LPC.

Over the course of the next several months you will hear more about our Statement of Faith in worship and Faith Acts. You will see how it is being used in our new member classes, new officer training and in our publications and on our website (you may go to langhornepres.org and follow the links under “who we are/what we believe” to view the online copy). I pray that you will find it as encouraging as I do.

If you have any questions or comments about the Statement of Faith, please feel free to let me know and I will be sure they are forwarded to the elders.

I am thankful for each of you and for this wonderful church family known as LPC!

Pastor Bill Teague