September 27, 2017

Friends,

As you know, as of Sept 10, the First Pres family has been gathering for worship under a revised schedule that offers three worship services: 8:30am (Blended), 10:45am (Traditional) and 11:05am (Contemporary), instead of the four services that we have offered for many years. The rationale behind this, as outlined in Pastor Jim’s email on Sept 7, included a desire to balance a “return to normal” with the reality that many of our members and visitors are still in various stages of recovery from Hurricane Harvey, to set aside an hour for our congregation to be in community with one another, to reduce the burden carried by some of our musicians, volunteers and staff during this challenging season, and to allow our pastors and elders to be more available to talk, listen, and pray with others.

So far, we have received very positive feedback from many members of the FPC family, including a surprising number who have either encouraged us to consider maintaining our present schedule into the future or indicated that they would understand why we might want to do so. As a result, at our regularly scheduled Sept 19 meeting, Session voted to extend this experiment to the end of the 2017 calendar year in order to learn more, and to solicit more feedback from you as to the benefits and challenges of the idea, especially as we move from making a temporary accommodation to a crisis to considering a change for the longer term.

One way that you can give us your immediate feedback will be to send an email to worshipcommittee@fpchouston.org. In addition, different teams will be reaching out in the form of individual conversations or even small “focus group” discussions. For example, we want to reach out individually to regular attendees of the 9:30 service to better understand the impact that this change will have on your ability to worship at First Pres. We will also make sure to talk with Sunday School class leaders and teachers, to the staff and volunteers within our ministries to children, youth and families, and to anyone else who would like to share how this possible change could impact you.

With special thanks to those most impacted by our decision to extend this experiment through the end of the year, we continue to pray that we will all be able to continue together in the spirit of grace, unity and community that we have experienced since Harvey’s arrival in Houston.

Yours in Christ’s Service,

David Calkins
Clerk of Session 2018

Cindy Cook
Clerk of Session 2019

Robert Moore
Clerk of Session 2020