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## FROM THE CHURCH HOUSE

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### **THANK YOU, JIM! REFLECTIONS ON AN INTERIM MINISTRY**

For over a year and a half, Jim Roghair has shared his insight and experience to guide our congregation through the uncertain landscape of our interim time. As we now begin the ministry of our new Senior Pastor, the FCCE community would like to express its gratitude to Jim for his dedicated



leadership... leadership that has given us a clearer sense of who we are as a community of faith, and what we hope to become in the years ahead.

Jim's background includes a Bachelor of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary and a Master of Theological Studies from Garrett-Evangelical. He was trained in Interim Ministry in the 1990s, and received his certification in this specialized area of ministry in 2003. Before coming to our church, Jim served in several inner city and suburban congregations. From 1987 to 1995, he ministered to a rural Inupiaq Eskimo congregation in Barrow, Alaska. This experience provided the background for his Master's thesis entitled *The Gift of the Whale: Community as Steward*.

His Interim Ministry with FCCE began on July 8, 2006. His pastoral skills were tested almost immediately as he led a series of memorial services. When he first reviewed our transition process, Jim counseled us to take a careful and deliberate approach by first defining who we were and what we were looking for in our next pastor. This advice led to the formation of the Transition Team, headed up by Hal Sprague, in August.

The Transition Team began its work by reviewing the history, traditions, culture, strengths, needs and desires of our congregation. The Team, together with the Ministry Council, held a retreat led by Jim in September where they explored these issues and were introduced to new ideas like the Theory of Congregational Size. After the retreat, the team began a series of small gatherings where members were asked to share their thoughts and ideas about the church. The Transition Team then reviewed their data and compiled a report that was released to the congregation in March, 2007.

We shared in Jim's sorrow with the passing of his father during this period, and admired the professionalism and grace he demonstrated during that difficult time. In December, Jim introduced our community to the "Longest Night" service held on the evening of the winter solstice. This quiet service acknowledges that sorrow is a part of the Christmas season for many, and offers comfort to those who do

not feel the “glow of the season” at that time of year.

Another practice introduced to us by Jim was the open sharing of joys and concerns during worship. Though we were initially a bit reticent, this practice has now become a fully integrated and familiar element of our Sunday service.

Jim led a variety of adult education sessions during his time with us, including a session on Stewardship based on his thesis, *The Gift of the Whale*, and a successful Saturday morning workshop in January 2007 entitled *Healthy Congregations*. This program, developed by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, offered valuable insight into the dynamics of relationships in congregations and how leaders can reduce anxiety and promote healthier responses within churches.

The formation of the Pastoral Search Team at the Annual Meeting in January 2007 marked a significant turning point in Jim’s ministry, and in the life of our church. The Search Team, under the leadership of Alan Cabbage, immediately began its own church-wide assessment that included a survey of demographic information as well as our members’ thoughts about faith and religion.

Building on the work of the Transition Team, the Search Team prepared a Church Profile: a detailed description of the church and the community that provided a clear “snapshot” of our church. This document, and the Transition Team Report, proved to be vitally important tools for finding a good match between our congregation and the ministerial candidates applying for our position.

As the Search Team continued its work, Jim encouraged us to dialogue with one another about our goals and our spiritual journeys. He introduced us to the book *Christianity for the*

*Rest of Us* by Diana Butler Bass which describes how contemporary mainline churches can flourish without mimicking the Evangelical style of today’s “mega-churches”. In late September, he organized discussions that encouraged members to make more meaningful connections between our mission statement, the goals presented by the Transition Team, and our church traditions.

In November, the Search Team made its announcement ~ a Senior Minister candidate had been selected by the team. The unanimous selection of David Denoon by the congregation on December 9<sup>th</sup> was the culmination of Jim’s successful interim ministry period, and marked the re-engagement of our community with its long-range ministry and mission.

We are grateful for the many gifts that Rev. Jim Roghair has shared with us during our time together. His gentle and caring guidance has helped us see ourselves more honestly and more clearly. He helped foster an environment in which our search process could move forward with clear purpose and a well-defined vision for what we need and want in our next minister. For this, and for so much more, we will always be grateful for his ministry with us.

Thank you, Jim ~ and God bless!

### **A NOTE OF GOOD-BYE**

Rev. Dr. James E. Roghair, Interim Minister

Thank you First Congregational Church of Evanston. You have invited me into your church and into your lives in a very intimate way, that of being your pastor. I’ve visited you in hospital rooms, talked to you about your hopes and fears (personal and church), I baptized some of you, married some of you, done memorial services for some of your loved ones. But all of this was not as a regularly called pastor, rather in this strange relationship of interim minister. Interim ministers do what

all ministers do, but it is a little more risky. It is risky because you never know what to expect from someone who is pre-fired! (What could you do if that interim minister is not working out?) The relationship is also risky because interim pastor and people may get to like one another so much that the parting itself is painful.

I am always hopeful that it is more the latter than the former. And with First Congregational Church, I have greatly enjoyed getting to know you and to work with you. I am proud of my personal opportunity to re-establish some of those old relationships between my own Presbyterian denomination and you the nearest cousin Congregationalists. Historically we have all worked together very closely. I am glad you trusted me to work here with you.

I am pleased with the work of your search team and the vote of the congregation. The young man you have called to lead you, appears to me as an ideal match. As a continuing resident of Evanston I will watch your progress with a secret joy – taking a little pride in your future faithfulness and success.

So, we say good-bye. It is never easy. I appreciate you very much. I share with you the love of God that makes us one. I will be in and out of the office until Thursday January 24. You may stop by or call if you would like a few moments to say good-bye. But after that, I will see you in the grocery stores, on the streets, at community events, and that will be good.

But I will not be your pastor. I will not expect to be counseling you (personally or about the work of the church), leading in worship, doing funerals or baptisms, or weddings. Those are the things that Rev. David Denoon will do. (I would only come back in an emergency and at your new pastor's request.)

Thank you to you all for inviting me into your lives and for working with me. God's richest blessings for you this new year and for all of your lives. – *Jim*

### **Ash Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>**

Families with children and teens are encouraged to attend

**Soup Supper 6:00  
Small Dining Room**

#### **Menu:**

Gumbo, Salad, Bread and Kings Cake

**Ash Wednesday Service  
7:00 The Guild Room**

The Church House  
1417 Hinman

## **THE MARKS OF A HEALTHY CONGREGATION**

One highlight of Jim's ministry with us was the *Healthy Congregations* workshop he conducted in January 2007. The session offered helpful guidance for church leaders and members in developing healthier environments within congregations. The following list of statements from the seminar workbook outlines some of the characteristics of "healthy" congregations:

### **Healthy congregations:**

- Accept differences rather than deny
- Focus on their strengths rather than weaknesses
- Focus on mission rather than "getting along", "the past", "the minister," survival, or some other thing or issue
- Respond to anxiety and change instead of reacting
- Manage conflict instead of denying it
- Act flexibly and creatively instead of rigidly.

### **In healthy congregations, leaders:**

- Promote health through their presence and functioning instead of techniques or skills
- Challenge people instead of comforting
- Provide immune capacities instead of enabling disease processes.

#### In healthy congregation, people:

- Respond graciously and truthfully rather than judgmentally or secretively
- Develop caring relationships rather than willful transactions
- Empower others rather than dominate them or cure them
- Recognize the creators interdependent design of life rather than isolated, unrelated parts
- Practice stewardship gratefully and willingly rather than begrudgingly
- Combine money and the Christian life rather than separate the one from the other
- Share their lives instead of each living for oneself
- Offer hospitality to all instead of favoritism for the few or like-minded.

### SUNDAY AFTERNOON BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The next meeting of the Sunday Afternoon Book Discussion Group will be Sunday,



February 10 at 4:00 pm in the Cora Brown Parlor. Cherie Weil will lead the discussion of the book

entitled: *Three Cups of Tea, One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend this informal discussion.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

<b>January</b>	1	Greg DeStefano
	1	Barbara B. Meyer
	2	Shelby Donnan
	2	Barb Fonda
	4	Robert Phelps
	5	Elena Daniels
	6	Joan Lindsey
	7	Nathaniel Crocker
	9	Georgia Evans
	9	Tom Stafford
	9	Asher Stamell
	10	Molly McKenna
	10	Zoe Snider
	11	Michael Colton
	14	Casey Wait
	16	Russell Maylone
	18	George Menco
	19	Heather DiSabato
	20	Christopher DiSabato
	23	Moulton (Bud) Goff
	24	Tyler Fonda
	25	Andy Plas
	26	Mary Greene
	27	Joyce Phelps
	29	Abigail Julcher
	31	Bram Chill
	31	Margaret Krause
<b>February</b>	2	Amy Colton
	2	Jake Snider
	2	Hal Sprague
	5	Pat Snyder
	7	Margaret Cothrine
	7	Ruth Robinson
	10	Jean Herbert
	10	Julia R. Weertman
	12	Melissa Pinney
	12	Maggie Stamell
	13	Trimmy Stamell
	15	Vera Ward
	17	Alex Doty
	18	Dominic Daniels
	22	Cybele Maylone
	23	Barbara Ferguson
	23	Barry Lundberg
	24	Kate Todd
	26	Wayne Ackerson
	26	Erv Stromer
	27	Bernie Armour
	27	Henry Doyle
	27	Nicholas Tucker
	28	Matthew Perkins

**THE HEIFER INTERNATIONAL**

## **FOUNDATION IS CO-SPONSORING A DISCUSSION COURSE, "VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY"**

Starting the first week of March 2008  
 Lake St. Church, 607 Lake St.  
 Evanston - Wednesdays, 7-8 pm,  
 Join a small group, 9-week discussion course on voluntary simplicity. This self-facilitated course, developed by the Northwest Earth Institute, addresses the distractions of modern society that keep us from caring for ourselves, our relationships, and our environment. For more information or to register for any of the groups, contact: Alyson Sowers at 312-850-3332 or [alyson.sowers@heifer.org](mailto:alyson.sowers@heifer.org).  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Feb. 15, 2008  
 from Laura Wilson

6

"What is This Lovely Fragrance?" - Willan

13

"Tomorrow Shall be My Dancing Day" - Gardner

"The Lone, Wild Bird" - Johnson

20

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" - Schrader

"Praise His Holy Name" - Hampton

27

"Awake, My Heart" - Marshall

"Lead On, Eternal Sovereign" - Hopson



## **February**

3

"Jesu, the Very Thought of Thee" - Halley

10

"Adam Lay Ybounden" - Ord

"I Wonder as I Wander" - Rütli

17

"There's A Wideness in God's Mercy" - Bevan

24

"All My Hope on God is Founded" - Howells

"Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks" -

Howells



**CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEMS**  
 January

**Save the Dates!**

**January 20**

Rev. Jim Boghair's