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**A Church On The Move**  
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December 3, 2011

Dear First Christian Church Family,

As I write this letter, it is hard for me to believe that we are approaching the second Sunday of Advent. This is my sixth Advent Season with First Christian Church of Naples, and just yesterday I was flipping through some old files and came across the theme for the 2006 Advent Season: Building a Highway. We described ourselves as building the roadway by which God would not only enter anew into our lives but the lives of many throughout Naples. On Peace Sunday of that year, I said in my sermon: “The highway we are building is us. We are the roadway by which God enters this world, and we must continually remodel and rework ourselves to be an obstacle-free pathway by which the Christ child finds his way into the manger of this day and every day.”

The words that stood out to me yesterday were: ‘remodel and rework’. If the church is going to be faithful and relevant, it must constantly be reshaping itself to be that ‘obstacle-free path’ by which God travels into the current context. We’re not changing God! We’re not changing the crux of the message! What we are doing is making sure that the means by which we share the message doesn’t become an obstacle that hinders the coming of God’s Good News.

Tomorrow (by the time you read this, it will be yesterday or a couple days ago), I will share at the Annual Congregational Meeting one of the things we will be reworking in the months to come. I am proposing an intentional transition that will help us to become better stewards of the resources we have, while most importantly, moving forward with the unique proclamation of the Gospel that First Christian Church offers. I am advocating that we begin the transition of Rev. Michael Junkroski to Sr. Minister of FCC as I begin stepping back.

I offer this proposal with the support of the FCC Leadership Team and the Regional Church. I do so because I truly feel as if it is what God is leading us to do. One of the important areas of work for the Leadership Team has been learning and then moving FCC to its financial line of sustainability (a term used by Rick Morse, our consultant from Church Extension). I question whether the church has ever really known or lived there in its history. With the selling of the building, we took a significant step toward living at the line of sustainability. Yet I remain the most significant financial expenditure in the church budget. You hired me in 2006 based upon an incorrect understanding of the financial situation. I was and continue to be paid too much for this size of congregation.

I do not currently have a new job, nor am I currently interviewing anywhere. My plan is to continue to work with Michael in the months to come as he continues with his seminary training. At the same time, I will be looking for another ministerial position. When the time comes, Michael will take over as Sr. Minister of First Christian Church of Naples. Tony DeLucia will remain on staff as he continues to work toward ministerial standing and seminary.

I do not have the authority to make this happen. It is a decision of the congregation. With that said, I firmly believe this is something God has had in the works for quite some time. It is humbling for me to look back over these last few years and clearly see how God was working to help FCC move out of the funk of our financial floundering (do you like the alliteration). As I have said at every step along the way, this one thing isn't our salvation. Our salvation rests with Christ, but every one of the steps we have taken is what allows us to live more faithfully for the sake of Christ.

We will most definitely have many more conversations in the weeks and months ahead, but I ask for your prayers--prayers for our church and its leadership--prayers that will help undergird our work as we continue to build a highway of faithfulness.

Finally, I want to thank each of you for your amazing encouragement and support over the last year as we transitioned out of a building and into our new reality of service and mission. First Christian Church is an amazing congregation...amazing because of your faithfulness.

Peace in Christ,

*Bruce*

Bruce D. Frogge  
Pastor