

December 22, 2023

Dear siblings in Christ,

As members of the Administrative Commission assigned to find a way forward in care for your congregation, we come to you as peers, colleagues, and friends in ministry. Representative of our community of congregations, we are Rev. Marilyn (MP) Panco of St. Mark Presbyterian Church in Ballwin – Chairperson, Ruling Elder Lawson Calhoun of Westminster Presbyterian Church of St. Louis, Rev. Alexandra Lysdahl of First United Presbyterian Church of Belleville, Ruling Elder Janice Hanson of Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, Rev. Chris Keating of Woodlawn Chapel Presbyterian Church – Recording Secretary, Ruling Elder Bill Port of Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, and Rev. Kerry Allison of First Presbyterian Church of Ferguson – Vice-Chairperson.

As elders and pastors and servant ministers of the Church of Jesus Christ, and out of a sense of love of God and for the Church of Jesus Christ, like you, we take the respective offices of our ministry very seriously.

It is disappointing that secular channels are being used to resolve matters of ministry and we would like the opportunity to come alongside you to address the ministry goals that, at least for us, remain unclear and unnamed. It is surprising and concerning that there are accusations made of wanting to “seize” church property, as if there were a desire to disrupt the ministry activity of Dardenne Presbyterian Church. Simply put, there is no such desire. Clarification is sought on what prompted these concerns so we can address them together in openness and transparency.

As members of the Administrative Commission, we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of having to proceed along two parallel tracks. One includes the process and procedures required under PC(USA) polity and the other includes the schedule and procedures of the secular legal system. Considering that, this letter is being extended as a courtesy letting you know that shortly, a response will be filed to the legal action that has been previously filed by Dardenne Presbyterian Church. As you are probably aware, our polity does not give an individual congregation the authority to exempt itself from the promises we have made to one another through the years. As such, our response will inform the court that we cannot in good faith support the position that any provisions of our polity do not apply to Dardenne Presbyterian Church, or that the words and actions of Dardenne Presbyterian Church regarding its property over the years should no longer bind it as a civil matter.

It is saddening that we engage one another in the context of a lawsuit, which undermines effort and opportunity to work toward Christian unity, understanding, and reconciliation, all ideals we know your community cares about deeply. While it is understood that the Dardenne lawsuit seeks to address only a property issue, the members of the Administrative Commission seek understanding of the context of ministry and ecclesial concerns as well.

Being committed to care for your congregation, our hope is that you will share every overture of outreach so that we may discern together the future ministry impact on Dardenne Presbyterian Church and the community of St. Charles County. Please know that even as events unfold in

secular court outside of Christian channels, we are keeping you in prayer by name, and will do everything possible to exercise care for you and your members, as an integral part of our body of community in ministry.

The Administrative Commission will do its best through outreach to minimize surprises by keeping you apprised of further action and continued conversation and continuing in conversation. Please feel free to share any questions that might arise, so that together we can seek clarity and understanding on shared goals for faithful ministry.

In the name of our reconciling Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

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