

Dear members and friends of Christ the King Presbyterian,

Each Lord's Day, God meets with His people in a special way in gathered worship. This is true each Lord's Day, but if you were present Sunday, October 16th, you sensed something special happened. It wasn't any one thing, but the way all things worked together to manifest God's presence to His people. Clayton's comments, the liturgy and Dr. Mark Futato's sermon all appeared coordinated and woven together to be a great source of comfort and encouragement. Except, they weren't coordinated at all. Clayton's report on the search process was originally scheduled for the previous week, but was delayed due to the hurricane. Yet, the Lord took the uncoordinated work of four different people and their individual words and crafted a worship service that accomplished His providential purpose—to communicate His steadfast love, care and continued work in and for His people at Christ the King. We're not trying to recreate the blessing of that service in this letter because the Lord moves in His own mysterious ways. But we do want you to be blessed and encouraged by some of what was said that morning.

Here is Clayton's report on the search process that prefaced our Call to Worship:

*Good morning, Church,*

*I've entitled these remarks "A Brief Accounting of the Faithfulness of God among Us."*

*First, let's acknowledge the obvious: we've been a long time without a pastor. I'd like to be able to announce that we have found the right man, but I can't, and so the search continues. I am as surprised by this as anyone. I thought that since Mike had not left due to controversy or conflict, and that the Church seemed healthy, a short vacancy would be best. However, God had other things in mind. Maybe a temporal distance will give the next pastor the freedom not to be compared with Mike in whatever he does.*

*Rest assured that we are working. We have spent hundreds of hours (some more than others), received 250+ resumes, conducted a couple dozen interviews by phone and webcam, and met with nine men face to face. From this we have found three or four men who could do the job, but who just did not quite fit. Earlier this year, the committee found a man whom all would have been glad to have as pastor. However, the candidate eventually withdrew his application, saying that he did not think that God had release him from his current call. This was disappointing, but he assured us it was not due to anything at this end; he simply was not able to leave where he was. In all this, the committee has been remarkably unified, and there has been no division among us. This has led us to believe that we have just not found the man. After all this time, we are committed to getting this right, rather than finishing quickly. So what about the faithfulness of God, or was that just a cover so that I could justify our work to you?*

*It seems to me, and to the Session, that God has clearly been at work among us during this time as the Spirit's work is clearly visible. The Word is preached. We have the privilege of an extremely*

*high caliber of pulpit supply, many of whom join us in a regular rotation and have committed themselves to help for the foreseeable future. Due to this, the Word has been proclaimed steadily and powerfully as we gather for worship each week. This is the Spirit's work among us. Also, the Sacraments have been administered. We gather monthly at the Lord's Table to be reminded, encouraged and strengthened as the Lord feeds His people. We have also had one covenant baptism, with another scheduled in the near future as the Lord continues to build His Church through the raising up of a godly posterity. This is the Spirit's work among us. Furthermore, the 'one anothers' of the Scriptures have been fulfilled among us as many of you have looked after one another and worked to meet needs in the church. This is the Spirit's work among us. And let's not forget that we have added new members. Yes, some have left for various reasons, but the Lord has added to our number as well. This is a refreshing surprise to us and a great encouragement during this time without a pastor. This is the Spirit's work among us.*

*Our response to all of this benevolence from the Lord should be obvious. Let us commit ourselves to persevere during this time and to keep on keeping on. As Paul urged the Thessalonians, "excel still more." Let us devote ourselves to fervent prayer for the man God will provide in due time and for the health of the Church in the interim. Let us devote ourselves to gathered, corporate worship on the Lord's Day as is fitting for the people whom God has called to Himself. He is good, He is faithful, and He is worthy of all praise.*

The service progressed in a beautiful way to reinforce Clayton's exhortation to us and then culminated with a powerful sermon by Dr. Mark Futato. Mark concluded his outstanding Ruth series by preaching on the last four verses, Ruth 4:18-22, a genealogy. It was such a blessing! Though unplanned, the entire service—from Clayton's report through the sermon to the concluding benediction—seamlessly proclaimed and affirmed God's faithfulness and *chesed*, covenant love, for His people.

We have enclosed a CD with Mark's sermon. We trust by listening to it, you will not only be encouraged, but get a taste of God's goodness.

Our concluding hymn that morning was "God Moves in a Mysterious Way." Indeed, He does!

For His Glory and in your service,

The Session of Christ the King Presbyterian