

## **CHARGE TO THE CONGREGATION** **by Jim Howland**

Fifteen months ago, the Pastor Nominating Committee began the important work of finding our next Pastor. As we install John and Dan today, we feel a deep sense of fulfillment, joy, and unabashed pride, and are brimming with hope and optimism for RPC's future.

While our work as a PNC is done, our work as a congregation is just beginning. Our co-pastors bring compelling attributes, skills, and experience to the leadership of this church. But this is not just about Dan and John - our ministry is shared, built on a partnership between clergy, lay leadership, and the congregation. After spending the better part of a year challenging candidates on how they would support our congregation, I'm delighted to complete the circle in humbly charging you, the congregation, on how best to support John and Dan

**First, *Trust and Embrace the Co-Pastor Model.*** We are in largely uncharted waters – what we are doing is not only new to RPC, but very unique nationally. This will take some patience and understanding, but the rewards are worth the effort! We are blessed in having co-pastors with a strong, trust-based relationship who are open communicators and enjoy partnering. As a congregation, we will need to view them not individually, but as part of one, integrated leadership team. The co-pastor model also empowers us, the congregation, to join in the leadership of the church with energy and commitment.

**Second, *Support BOTH John and Dan's Transition into New Roles.*** With John - let's be honest - we are not an easy community to break into. Please *proactively* welcome John, his wife Heather, and their family to our faith community. John is warm, approachable, thoughtful, and engaging. One of my favorite quotes from our PNC reference checks was from one of John's Presbytery colleagues who, in describing Presbytery meetings, said (and I quote), "When John Miller enters the room, everyone knows they will have a good time."

With Dan, please appreciate that he is in a new role, a well-earned recognition of his many talents and gifts, and the extraordinary energy, Godly wisdom, and loving compassion he has provided this church for 16 years. He is no longer our Associate Pastor. He is our Co-Leader, and deservedly so.

**Third, *Imagine Amazing Possibilities under Dan and John's Leadership.*** We should be very proud of who we are as a church today and our many activities that support our church community and others in need. That said, we have a wonderful opportunity in front of us. The PNC did not look for a candidate that could maintain the status quo, but one who could build on our strengths and take us to an entirely new level. This is our time to capitalize on our new extraordinary leadership and to have this faith community soar!

**Fourth and Finally, *Strengthen your Personal Commitment to our Faith Community.*** Spiritual growth comes from being engaged – giving to the church of your time, talent, and treasure. This involvement starts with Sunday morning worship, but goes well beyond that to other church activities. In addition, I encourage you to be disciples, to spread the good word, and encourage others to join our church. I've been delighted to see so many new and returning faces on Sunday mornings. Let's capitalize on our new leadership to build the strength of our congregation.

In closing, this is a day to celebrate the installation of Dan and John. It is also a day to think about how we as a congregation are going to partner with them to take this spiritual community to exciting new levels. The possibilities are endless, and I look forward with great anticipation and enthusiasm to our journey together.