



Dear Southminster Church members and friends,

During worship on Sunday, 4/21, we heard a Moment for Ministry from Lea Smith, on behalf of the session. Here is what she said:

Good morning. I'm here to bring you a message and invitation from the Session.

After the events of last fall, and considering other earlier incidents, the Session was troubled. We were not so much in conflict, as we were deeply troubled. We sensed that the congregation, too, was confused and troubled. We investigated possible avenues of communication, conflict resolution and ways to move forward in a positive manner. We chose a two-step process.

In November, we each, separately, participated in a listening session with 2 or 3 pastors or elders from other churches who had volunteered to listen. At the conclusion of the listening sessions, the listeners prepared a summary of the concerns they had heard.

The second step started about the first of the year. Session engaged Dr. Diane G. Flaherty, a specialist in interpersonal and organizational communications who has helped other churches and organizations. We started working with her at each Session meeting to process the feelings, hurts, and concerns we had from the leadership challenges and changes these past several years. She has helped Session to create a safe environment for productive discussions about these difficult matters. Through her teachings and exercises, Session members are becoming better listeners.

We know we aren't alone in feeling some confusion, hurt, and even anger. We have heard that you also have unresolved feelings from these incidents. We want to listen as you share your concerns about these difficult matters. We will provide a safe place for you to participate in small group meetings. There will be a number of different times and days offered. Each will consist of about 10 folks, 8 church members and two Session members and will last about 1 – 1.5 hours. It is Session's hope that healing can take place and that

we, as a Church are again, moving forward in a positive spiritual direction and are ready to embrace a new Senior Pastor and a new Director of Music.

Starting next week, you can check the church website or call the office to register for one of these small group meetings. We look forward to meeting with you.

Please consider attending one of these listening times with session. We want to hear your stories and let you know that we care and are working to help Southminster Presbyterian Church become the church that God wants it to be.