

St. John's

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ESTABLISHED IN 1870

June 1, 2020

25 Lake Street
San Francisco
California 94118

phone: 415-751-1626
www.stjohnssf.org



To Whom It May Concern,

In 1870, Rev. Dr. William Anderson Scott left Calvary Presbyterian Church to start a new church, St. John's Presbyterian Church, in San Francisco. Dr. Scott had a vision based on one thought, "One day there will not be so much as a vacant square foot of land on the San Francisco peninsula, and thus, it is folly to advocate a reduction in the number of churches, rather we should be building throughout the City until every neighborhood is served." With this in mind, Dr. Scott's vision was not limited to congregations, but building a seminary to educate future leaders to serve those congregations, eventually becoming the founder and first president of San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS).

I have had the pleasure of serving as pastor to St. John's Church for the past 17 years. I have also served as the moderator of the Presbytery of San Francisco as well as many roles at the General Assembly (GA) and the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) denomination. Some of those roles have been as a GA commissioner, Vice Moderator candidate, a GA committee moderator, and a committee assistant to varying types of committees. I have seen the incredible thought that goes into what is put on the consent agenda, what needs more deliberation, and what needs more conversation. **Therefore, I am surprised that a decision like the dissolution of relationship or change to covenant relationship between PCUSA and SFTS is not given an opportunity for discussion and discernment by the wider body at the upcoming General Assembly this June nor the wider PCUSA community.** Does it make sense that a 150-year relationship doesn't even get 150 seconds of docket time?

I understand that there are grievances for the process of how decisions were made regarding the relationship between the

University of Redlands and SFTS, but this issue deserves time – more time beyond this GA, more time in committee, more time on the plenary floor and more time in the wider body of PCUSA.

SFTS is the only PCUSA seminary on the West Coast. Half of the 68 congregations and 10 new worshipping communities in the Presbytery of San Francisco (PSF) are either immigrant, racial ethnic, or multi-ethnic congregations. Many of these congregations are served by Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE). So much so that PSF has an education center for educating and certifying CRE's and utilizes professors from SFTS to teach reformed theology, polity, and other classes pertinent to certification. For immigrant and racial ethnic churches supporting these CRE's, it is important to them that they are taught by a professor in a PCUSA seminary.

Again, I highly urge you to postpone making decisions on this item so that more faithful conversations between all parties can happen in an amount of time that it deserves.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Theresa Cho, Pastor