



January 9, 2010

Dear Family of Redeemer,

Greetings and peace to you in this New Year in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! What a year of transition and new beginnings this will be for you and for me. I am greatly humbled, challenged, and excited about the ministry that lies ahead of us together. Redeemer, I have been blessed to learn, is a congregation of deep faith, wonderfully faithful and gifted people, strong tradition and history, and bold vision. The recent past has been challenging, yet I even now invite you to consider that for people of faith for whom Christ already resides in and owns the future, hope is always stronger than memory. Whether those memories are of glories celebrated or of struggles endured, hope is *always* stronger.

During the past three days, our oldest son Matt left for a mission trip in Honduras for the seminary's January term, our middle child Isaac returned to Lenoir-Rhyne for his final semester of college, and we drove our daughter Ruth back to Chapel Hill for her new semester. Upon our return home this evening from that trip, we were thrilled finally to receive in the mail and to read the official Letter of Call from Redeemer that due to the holidays and much-needed vacation time among the Southeastern Synod staff, were delayed until this week.

With deep gratitude to those on the Search Team, Staff, Compensation Committee, and Congregation Council who guided and helped discern this partnership as well as to the people of Redeemer who have entrusted me with this vote of call, I hereby attest in writing what I have shared over the phone and through email. I accept this call to be Redeemer's new Senior Pastor. I must admit some trepidation at transitioning from a small resort and university town and ministry to a large city and congregation, but I am confident that God will guide my learning curve and bless us as we grow together.

My first Sunday at Redeemer will be February 14, and I think it appropriate that we will begin our relationship by moving quickly into the penitential season of Lent. The first face-to-face word I will say to many of you will be on Ash Wednesday, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." As we are reminded not to take ourselves too seriously, if for no other reason than our mortality, we will be better able to move together into what I hope will be years of Easter Alleluias as well.

Thank you for this opportunity. I will do my best to be a faithful minister of Word and Sacrament among you and to continue to equip and guide your ministry at Redeemer.

Your partner in ministry,

Pastor Timothy M. Smith