

March 11, 2009

Dear Messrs Bacon, Graham, McGowan and Sutton,

Those whose signatures appear below attest to this letter commending the pastoral work, life, and ministry of Rev. David Cummings. He was our pastor for in some cases many years and in other cases only a little over one year, but his impact on all of us is so great that we wish to bear witness of it to you. Below our signatures some of us have written a short statement summarizing what his pastoral ministry meant to us.

*The office of the minister is the first in the church for dignity and usefulness. . . . As he has oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his Church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house of God, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he is commanded to warn the house of God against the enemies of God and his Word, he is termed watchman. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God (DPW VI:A.2).*

We recognize that Rev. Cummings is, like all of us, sinful and fallen, and Rev. Cummings is the first to admit his imperfections and failings. Jesus is our perfect example. He is our perfect shepherd and our perfect husband. We wish to attest to you though, that through the grace of God, Rev. Cummings fulfilled his calling in his ministry to us at Faith Church. He was our dignified and prudent overseer. He faithfully fed us week after week from God's Word – expositing the whole counsel of God with great power and efficacy—striving to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and encouraging the flock under his care to do the same. He was Christ's tender undershepherd toward us—a picture of Christ's gentle but firm care for us. He often offered fervent, effectual prayer on our behalf. He was a grave and prudent example to us—conscientious and eminently competent to govern well in the house of God. He took to heart his role as ambassador—declaring the will of God to His sheep and calling to repentance those outside of Christ. As our watchman he alertly stood guard against the enemies of God and his Word. He taught us discernment in recognizing God's enemies, alerted us to their devices, and admonished us to take up the armor of God to guard against them. And finally, he fulfilled his calling as a steward of the mysteries of God by faithfully ministering to his flock the efficacious means of grace and the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism. God made this man of great usefulness to the body of Christ. Through Rev. Cummings's ministry to us, the unconverted have been reconciled to Christ, the saints have been built up in our holy faith, and covenant children have been brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.

*The office of the minister is the first in the church for dignity and usefulness (DPW VI:A.2).* In John's vision recounted in Revelation 1, the messengers of the seven churches of God are represented in heaven as seven stars, offering us a vivid picture of the importance and dignity God affords the office of minister. I Timothy 5:17 counsels “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” Verse 19 admonishes, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.” Certainly the dignity and usefulness of the office of minister is well documented in Scripture. For this reason we extend honor to you in your service on this commission and respectfully request that you honor Rev. Cummings in all of your proceedings.

We miss Rev. Cummings's ministry at Pole Tavern greatly. Many of the undersigned have been dispersed among mostly non-Orthodox Presbyterian churches because of their concern over the treatment of our pastor following his wife's tragic suicide (after her long battle with severe depression). Of these, many are still members of Faith Church. Others of the undersigned are still attending Faith church, though we share many of the concerns of those who have left. We are all watching with concern the unfolding circumstances and waiting to see the hand of fellowship extended to Pastor Cummings. We watch with great interest to see what the conclusion of these matters in the commission will be. We praise God for the faithfulness Rev. Cummings showed to Mrs. Cummings as her loving husband. Even in his current Job-like circumstances he has been an example to us of a childlike trust in the goodness and faithfulness of God. It is our hope, as you investigate the circumstances which have led to the formation of this commission, that you will recognize in him the godly man whose ministry we enjoyed. We hope that you will soon restore his well-deserved good name among God's people in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church so that he may once again be returned to unsullied usefulness as a minister of Christ.