

First Free Methodist Church

December 13, 2010

Dear First Free Methodist Family,

We are delighted to announce the appointment of the Rev. Dr. R. Blake Wood as Lead Pastor of Seattle First Free Methodist Church. Pastor Wood and his wife Lori will begin their ministries at First Church this summer.

From the beginning of this process we have prayed for unanimity, and God has answered this prayer! The decision to offer this position to Pastor Wood comes with the unanimous support of everyone involved in the process (Bishop Matt Thomas, our Pastoral Search Committee, the Local Board of Administration of our church, and the Pacific Northwest Conference Ministerial Appointments Committee.)

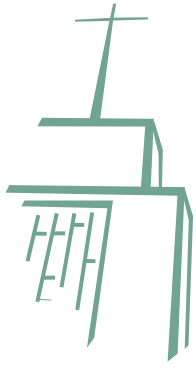
Blake Wood grew up in a suburb of Washington, D. C., and met his wife, Lori, at a Christian retreat in the area. Accepting Christ as his savior at age 11, Blake made a deeper commitment of full surrender and dedication to the Lord at age 20. He has been in full-time Christian service ever since. He and Lori married when he was 22, and they have 5 children, ranging from 2 to 18.

Blake received his B.A. at University of Maryland, his Masters of Divinity at Asbury Theological Seminary, and his Doctor of Ministry at Regent University. He began ministry while still in college, first as a youth pastor, then as an assistant pastor. While at Asbury, he was pastor of the Calvary FM Church in Lexington, KY. After seminary, he served for six years as church planter and pastor of the New Life Community (FM) Church in Olney, MD. For two years he served as Director of Missionary Personnel for Free Methodist World Missions. Following this Pastor Blake served for four years as Lead Pastor for Cornerstone Community (FM) Church in St. Petersburg, FL, a congregation facing financial struggles. During his ministry there, attendance grew and the church experienced a significant expansion of this ministry and influence.

Since 2001, Blake has served as church planter and Area Director for Free Methodist World Missions.

The search committee and LBA were particularly impressed with the "Ministry Values" statement developed by Pastor Blake and his colleagues and found it highly compatible with the "Pastoral Profile" developed over several months by the search committee and the LBA.

The search has been long and demanding—but always driven by prayer and an earnest seeking of the clear guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit. We want to express our deep appreciation for Pastor David Hicks and the church staff for their leadership through this transition. Their ministry is preparing each of us for the exciting future we are anticipating with Pastor Wood.



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We give thanks and all glory for God's sovereign direction of this entire process. Let us offer fervent prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God, immediately followed by prayers of petition that God will bless and facilitate every detail of the Woods' transition to Seattle. Please join us in praying that God will prepare our hearts to encourage, support, and participate in the ministries of the Rev. Dr. Blake Wood, and to give whole-hearted and gracious welcome to the entire Wood Family.

To God be the glory!

Matt Whitehead
Superintendent of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the FMC

David Simmons
Chairman of First Church Local Board of Administration

On behalf of the Pastoral Search Committee and the Local Board of Administration:

Carol Bartlett	Garry Allmon
David Dickerson	Tim Cromeenes
Margaret Diddams	Stan Diddams
Mel MacDonald	Jeanette Fiess
Kari Hanson	Corey Hays
Andy Sullivan	Jim Johnson
	Rosemary Kneeling
	Jeremy Stendera
	Bob Terry
	Gary Tranter
	Vi Walls
	Linda Weschler