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As people of the Way, we are always on a journey -- a journey of discernment, listening for God, living into the direction and will of God for our lives. We have the opportunity each day to invite God's Spirit to fall afresh on us as we pray to melt to our own desires, be molded by God's desire for us, to be filled with the loving Spirit of God and to be used by God - in big ways and small.

As I thought about how to introduce our time together today, I thought about saying that we began this intentional journey of discernment a couple of years ago through the New Beginnings process. But then I realized, as people of the Way, we as a faith community have been on an intentional journey of discernment for more than 100 years. We have listened and moved in directions radical for their time. We have made decisions for our community and our neighbors that say, we support you, We are God's witness for you in this day and time. And I also realized that we are, with this next stage of our journey, simply continuing in that powerful tradition to be a faithful witness to the living power of God today, 2013, in South Arlington, Virginia.

A little more than a year ago, the Session and the congregation commissioned a group of people to specifically be our listeners and discerners for this time. After the New Beginnings process, Session hired a New Church Development Coach and she worked with this group of people, the Vision Team, throughout the past year. At the end of last summer we gathered as a congregation and the Vision Team presented their findings to us. The vision for this next leg of our journey began to become clear. We encouraged the vision team to move forward and flesh things out. And in February of this year, the Vision Team presented its final report to Session and to the congregation. Together with Session, we blessed their findings and agreed to move forward with our three-fold Vision -- To nurture disciples of Jesus Christ, to serve our community as a place of crossroads and connections, and to be good stewards of our building and land by pursuing a redevelopment of our property that would provide affordable housing and more to our community.

Now I don't know if you see this thread of continuity as clearly as I do, but maybe you're starting to? A decade or so, as we began an intentional discernment process then called Transforming Congregations, the team leading that process was blessed with a Vision Statement that laid out for us the direction God was calling us to move in. Do you remember it? Can you say it with me? It has been on our weekly bulletin cover ever since:

Moved by God's love and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Arlington Presbyterian Church is challenged by the Word of God to welcome all, to nurture spiritual growth and to serve with compassion. We proclaim Jesus Christ is Lord.

A powerful statement. Challenging to live into. But we did not live into it alone. We were moved by God's love - for God's people, for God's community, for God's world - and we were empowered by the Holy Spirit. And what is God calling us to live into today? Discipleship - to nurture spiritual growth. To be a place of crossroads and connection for all the segments of our changing demographic community - to welcome all. And to use our valuable asset of land to create a new place where the otherwise disenfranchised can live and be an active part of the community they work in (affordable housing), and more - to serve with compassion. And all of this, along with new worship space for a committed faith community, in the very heart of this redeveloped property, proclaims loudly that for us, Jesus Christ is Lord!

Yes, we are doing a new thing. Hasn't God been calling us to a new thing and faithfully supporting us in a new thing for the last 100 years? We are called by God to continue to listen and discern, trusting that God has great things for us, new life, new opportunities to proclaim his love and to witness to the power of God in our little corner of the world in South Arlington.

And so, we continue to move forward living into this latest leg of our journey. Most of you are now part of a Discipleship Group. Through these, we will nurture our relationship with Jesus Christ as well as our relationships with one another. Through these groups, we will be strengthened to continue to be a faithful witness to Jesus Christ in our community. We are even now physically a place of crossroads along the Columbia Pike corridor. We continue to discern how God is calling us to partner with others to be that place of connection as we have been with the Clothing Bank, with SEEC as we host their Green Housecleaning Training Program, and more. And today, we are offering you a glimpse into what the redevelopment of our property could look like to provide affordable housing and more.

As just a bit more background, in February, the Congregation supported the idea of engaging the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) to conduct a feasibility study on the redevelopment of our property. In June, we, along with APAH, took the feasibility study and our hopes for redevelopment to the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property (ACCP) of National Capital Presbytery. After Session's approval of the Predevelopment

Agreement between APC and APAH on July 7, we provided the ACCP with a package of information about APC and APAH asking for their consideration and direction regarding our moving forward with the redevelopment. The ACCP enthusiastically received our package and endorsed our moving forward to the next phase, the Predevelopment phase.

(Please note: All information submitted to the ACCP including the Feasibility Study results and the Predevelopment agreement is available to any member of the congregation for review)

In addition, two important decisions came out of the ACCP review and comments. They determined that the overall redevelopment will require congregational approval and that the project will also require approval by the Presbytery.

We will hold a congregational meeting to vote to move forward with the redevelopment. After that vote, assuming it is an enthusiastic yes, we will bring the project to Presbytery for a vote.

In preparation for this, we have invited our partners from APAH and others to share a presentation on the preliminary findings regarding the redevelopment of our property as a result of the Feasibility Study. We have assembled, along with the folks at APAH, a team of people to lead this effort. The Affordable Housing team - me, Judy Robb, Kristl Hathaway, Mary Helen Harris and Sharon Core; a Project Manager, representing the church, recently approved by Session, Jill Norcross, and an attorney to represent our interests, Mark Viani. You will have an opportunity to meet and talk with everyone after the APAH presentation and to find out more during the Question and Answer period following the presentation. We will have another presentation to the congregation on September 15th after worship and all materials, reports, etc. will be available for your review in the church office.

At this time, I would like to welcome our friends from APAH, Nina Janopaul, Laura London and Carmen Romero.