



Second Presbyterian Church

P.O. BOX 175
201 W. FREDERICK ST.
STAUNTON, VA 24402-0175

Daniel S. Williams, *Pastor*
email: dsw-office@sec-stn.org

Office: 540.885.8159
Web Site: www.sec-stn.org

April 29, 2009

Stephen F. Owen, City Manager
City of Staunton
P. O. Box 58
Staunton, VA 24402-0058

Dear Mr. Owen:

It has come to our attention that recently, the City of Staunton erected a sign on the utility pole at the intersection of Lewis and Frederick Streets designating the entire north side of Frederick Street that fronts Second Presbyterian Church (and apparently, beyond) as a no parking zone, except for Sunday. We write out of concern for the effects this change has on the membership and ministries of Second Church.

First, if this designation is to be maintained, fairness dictates that the City do a better job of identifying that the no parking zone exists, and how far out Frederick Street it runs. As now posted, the sign can only be seen in one of three directions from which traffic approaches the Lewis and Frederick Street intersection, from northbound on Lewis Street. Traffic approaching the church along Frederick Street or off of southbound Lewis Street, as many of our church members do, will never see this sign.

However, it is our hope that this sign will be removed completely, and officers will be directed to cease ticketing cars parked along Frederick Street in front of Second Church. Available parking for our members who wish to attend events at the church during the week has always been limited, but became even more acute last summer when Central United Methodist Church ended its arrangement with the city to lease two thirds of its parking lot for municipal parking (the former Willson Lot). Central Church has every right to utilize its property in whatever way it chooses, but the City having posted Frederick Street in front of Second Church as a no parking zone has created a hardship for persons who wish to participate in our events during the week, including but not limited to:

- Tuesday Bible Studies, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Monthly Circle meetings, the second Tuesday morning and evening, and the second Wednesday evening
- Choir rehearsals every Thursday evening
- Committee meetings throughout the month, on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and the monthly Session (church council) meeting on the final Wednesday of the month.
- The monthly church fellowship dinner and program on the third Wednesday evening of each month, where often we hear programs presented by mission partners we support, many of them located within Staunton or Augusta County.
- In addition, there are people who park in front of the church in order to access the Church Office, call on the pastor, pick up materials for teaching assignments or other tasks, and a variety of other causes that bring them to Second Church.

This situation is a great impediment to our members who have mobility issues, particularly our older members who have disability parking privileges. (We ask our members to leave the spots along Frederick Street to these members.)

We recognize the concerns the City has in controlling the flow of traffic through the Lewis-Frederick Streets intersection, especially with the Post Office drop boxes across the street from the church entrances. In the past, the Session has written with its concerns about the accidents that frequently occur within this intersection, several of which have caused considerable property damage to the church. However, these situations are not caused by parking along the front of the church building, but most often by driver error, particularly excessive speed and failure to obey the traffic signal. Additionally, Frederick Street is only 'lined' for two lanes in front of Second Church – a restricted lane for the mail boxes, and one lane of traffic proceeding west on the street. There is more than sufficient room for traffic if cars are parked in front of the church, just as there is in all of the blocks on Frederick Street prior to Lewis Street, where there is curb parking and two lanes of westbound traffic. Second Church is thus the only business along Frederick Street that is denied the opportunity for those wishing to do business with the church to park in front of the building (or, across the street from it).

We recognize that if the City would remove the sign and mark specific parking spaces along the front of our building, an unintended result might be that people doing business elsewhere in the downtown area might park there, seeing it as an opportunity for free parking. However, if the City would quietly remove the sign and not ticket cars parked in front of the church – especially during the evening hours after 6:00 – people would notice the change about as much as our members noticed the posting of the single no parking sign, which is to say, almost not at all.

For over 130 years, Second Presbyterian Church has been on the corner of Lewis and Frederick Streets, faithfully serving our Lord, the City of Staunton, and the surrounding area. We ask that the City please see its way clear to addressing this concern in a way that permits our members, particular our older ones, the opportunity to easily access the ministries provided by their church. If you would like to discuss this issue, please call me at the church number, above, or on my wireless phone, 540-280-5850.

Sincerely,

Daniel S. Williams

Pastor and Moderator of Session

Approved unanimously by action of the Session, Second Presbyterian Church, April 29, 2009

cc Elder Kay Moyer, Clerk of Session

Elder Chuck Blackley, Chairperson, Property Committee