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PRESS RELEASE

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University Presbyterian Church's Pastor, Rev. Dr. Sandra Winter, to Retire After 25 Years of Ministry

Tuscaloosa, AL – The Rev. Dr. Sandra L. Winter will be honorably retired on July 1, 2006, after serving as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) for 25 years. For the past nine years, she has served at University Presbyterian Church as pastor and Presbyterian Campus Minister at The University of Alabama.

Rev. Winter earned her Master of Divinity degree from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, in 1980. She was ordained in 1981 and served at the Center for Women and Religion in Berkeley from 1981 through 1985, when she became the Associate Pastor at Berkeley's St. John's Presbyterian Church. In 1990, Rev. Winter became the solo pastor of yoked congregations in Garberville and Leggett, serving in that capacity through 1997. In 1996, she earned a Doctorate of Ministry from the San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS), where she was in the first Feminist Doctor of Ministry program.

“My call to ministry was deeply related to feminism,” said Rev. Winter. “The church that I knew growing up and as a young adult was led by males. The books I read and the teachers and ministers I had were all males. Everything was mental, intellectual,

from the head. It seemed like half a church. I longed for a church that would welcome the gifts of women – a church that would value the integration of body, mind and spirit – my call came from that longing. I wanted to help make the church that kind of church. I still feel that way.”

A number of her classmates at SFTS were Korean women, which lead her to spend five weeks in Seoul, Korea. Her dissertation project, for which she earned an award for outstanding work, was titled, "An Unsung Lament: The Suffering of Korean Women Taken for Military Sexual Slavery During World War II."

“After I had been in California for 20 years, I decided I was ready to return home to the south and I hoped there would be a church in the south ready for me as their minister,” said Winter. “I took a map and drew a circle with a 250 mile radius around Chattanooga because that is where my grandchildren were. I received a CIF (Church Information Form) from a church in Tuscaloosa – 215 miles from Chattanooga. It was a small church with a large heart, and I knew I was called to University Presbyterian Church (UPC).”

The last nine years of Rev. Winter’s ministry have been spent at UPC. During Rev. Winter’s ministry, UPC started the Building on Faith initiative, which resulted in the construction of a much-needed new Presbyterian Student Center. The center was dedicated in 2002 and was subsequently named the Winter-Vallery Presbyterian Student Center in honor of Dr. Arlee Vallery and Rev. Winter.

“UPC was originally Westminster Chapel – a center for Presbyterian student ministry,” said Rev. Winter. “Its birth as a church came in the midst of the civil rights

movement when the students and their campus minister welcomed the African American visitors from Stillman College.”

Rev. Winter helped UPC continue its pursuit of social justice and inclusiveness in 2001 when UPC became the only “More Light Congregation” in Alabama. More Light Presbyterians is a national group that advocates for the full inclusion of the GLBT community in the life and leadership of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

“Campus Ministry, social justice and inclusiveness are inherent and integral to what we are called to be,” said Rev. Winter. “UPC is continuing to live into that history.”

Upon retirement, Rev. Winter will live in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where her sons and grandchildren currently reside.

A celebration of Rev. Winter’s retirement will take place on June 25, 2006, at University Presbyterian Church (1127 Eighth Street). It will begin at 11 a.m. with a special worship service during which Rev. Winter will preach her last sermon at UPC. The celebration will continue with a potluck meal and commemorative event after the service. The event is open to all who would like to share in celebrating Rev. Winter’s ministry. More information is available at www.uaupc.org or at (205) 758-5422.

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