

SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 20, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:25pm and Martha Barnes started our time with a devotion on prayer. She shared from Kyle Strobel's recent lesson, "We enter into prayer, we don't generate it. We enter into prayer with Him. It starts with the Father, Son, and Spirit." Do we treat prayer as a transaction? That's not the idea at all: prayer is intimate, deep and personal. It's like learning a new language. Using the Psalms can be a great learning ground for prayer, coupled with silence. We spent some reflective time in prayer and Russell Willingham led us in song.

Key Items of Business were:

1. Treasurer Randy Wilson reported to us that the giving for December was generous, about \$600,000 above budget forecasts. Year to date, the church has a \$1.1MM surplus after expenses. The Advisory Council, in its role as Personnel Committee, will appoint a task force to review salaries of peer churches. This is in response to the discussions at the annual congregational meeting to review pastor salaries in relation to the market.
2. David McCarty and members of the Reconciliation Team presented their report. This team is comprised of members with diverse perspectives and opinions who have spent nearly thirty hours together over the past several months to explore what reconciliation means and advise Session on ways to foster healing within the congregation. During this time they came to a deeper understanding of what it means to reconcile and listen to one another. We heard from each member of the team: Marc Boom, George Jackson, Lori Johnson, Sarah Seifert, David Sears, Janice Barber, Jim Birchfield, and David McCarty. (Kelly Buchanan, Daniel Knight and Randy Butler could not be present). Session was very appreciative of all the work and received the report. Given the magnitude of the report, only part of it was adopted with the remaining to be reviewed and taken up again at the next session meeting.
3. Bill Gutermuth led a discussion on the elder nominating process. We approved a proposal to clarify and specify the expectations and add a statement of commitment for incoming ruling elder candidates.
4. Jon Crantz recruited a larger team of ruling elders to participate in the New Member class to answer questions of new members in smaller groups.
5. Jim Birchfield gave a "dashboard" of how things are going in church participation with attendance in worship, prayer gatherings, and Sunday school classes. On average it seems attendance is about 8% down from where it was this summer. December figures were similar to two years ago. There were 500 people at the last prayer gathering which is up significantly from the prior months.

6. Jim briefly reviewed the status of the Vision 2020 priorities. Session recently completed two weekend retreats with Kevin Ford of TAG Consulting in a re-visioning time of what it means to be a missional church. Core Values, Leadership Restructuring, and Outreach Priorities were identified. Session needs to spend time reviewing the progress to date to determine its next steps. The results of this work will be reported to the congregation in the near future.

The meeting was closed in a time of praying together and then receiving communion.